

Sūrah Al-Fajr

(The Dawn)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 30 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 30

وَالْفَجْرِ ﴿١﴾ وَلَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ ﴿٢﴾ وَالشَّفْعِ وَالْوَتْرِ ﴿٣﴾ وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَسْرِ ﴿٤﴾ هَلْ فِي ذَلِكَ قَسَمٌ لِّذِي حَبْرِ ﴿٥﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِعَادٍ ﴿٦﴾ إِرَمَ ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ ﴿٧﴾ الَّتِي لَمْ يُخْلَقْ مِثْلُهَا فِي الْبِلَادِ ﴿٨﴾ وَثُمُودَ الَّذِينَ جَابُوا الصَّخْرَ بِالْوَادِ ﴿٩﴾ وَفِرْعَوْنَ ذِي الْأَوْتَادِ ﴿١٠﴾ الَّذِينَ طَغَوْا فِي الْبِلَادِ ﴿١١﴾ فَكَثُرُوا فِيهَا الْفُسَادَ ﴿١٢﴾ فَصَبَّ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّكَ سَوْطَ عَذَابٍ ﴿١٣﴾ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبِالْمِرْصَادِ ﴿١٤﴾ فَأَمَّا الْإِنْسَانُ إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَأَكْرَمَهُ وَنَعَّمَهُ ۖ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَكْرَمَنِ ﴿١٥﴾ وَأَمَّا إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهُ ۖ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَهَانَنِ ﴿١٦﴾ كَلَّا بَلْ لَا تَكْرُمُونَ الْيَتِيمَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَلَا تَحْضُونَ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمُسْكِينِ ﴿١٨﴾ وَتَأْكُلُونَ التُّرَاثَ أَكْلًا لَّمًّا ﴿١٩﴾ وَتُحِبُّونَ الْمَالَ حُبًّا جَمًّا ﴿٢٠﴾ كَلَّا إِذَا دُكَّتِ الْأَرْضُ دَكًّا دَكًّا ﴿٢١﴾ وَجَاءَ رَبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا ﴿٢٢﴾ وَجِئَءَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِجَهَنَّمَ ۚ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ وَأَنَّى لَهُ الذِّكْرَى ﴿٢٣﴾ يَقُولُ يَلَيَّتَنِی قَدَمْتُ لِحَيَاتِي ﴿٢٤﴾ فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَا يُعَذِّبُ

عَذَابُهُ أَحَدٌ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَلَا يُوثِقُ وَثَاقَهُ أَحَدٌ ﴿٢٦﴾ يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ
 ارجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً ﴿٢٧﴾ فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي
 ﴿٢٨﴾ وَادْخُلِي جَنَّتِي ﴿٢٩﴾

I swear by the dawn, [1] and by the Ten Nights, [2] and by the even and the odd, [3] and by the night when it moves away, [4] Is there (not) in that an oath (enough) for a man of sense? [5] Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with (the people) of 'Ad [6] of *Iram*, the men of tall pillars, [7] the like of whom were never created in the lands, [8] and (how He dealt) with (the people of) *Thamūd* who had carved out the rocks in the Valley (of *Qura*), [9] and with *Fir'aun* (the Pharaoh), the man of the stakes, [10] all those who had rebelled in the cities, [11] and spread a lot of mischief therein. [12] So, your Lord unloosed on them the whip of torment. [13] Surely your Lord is ever on the watch. [14] As for man, when his Lord tests him, and thus gives him honour and bounties, he says, "My Lord has honoured me." [15] But when he tests him, and thus straitens his provision for him, he says, "My Lord has disgraced me." [16] No! But you do not honour the orphan, [17] and do not encourage one another to feed the needy. [18] And you devour the inheritance with a sweeping gulp, [19] and love wealth, with an excessive love. [20] No! When the earth will be crushed thoroughly to be turned into bits, [21] and your Lord will come, and the angels as well, lined up in rows, [22] and *Jahannam* (Hell), on that day, will be brought forward, it will be the day when man will realise the truth, but from where will he take advantage of such realisation? [23] He will say, "O Would that I had sent ahead (some good deeds) for (this) my life!" [24] So, that day, no one can punish as He will punish, [25] nor can anyone shackle like He will shackle. [26]

(As for an obedient man, it will be said to him,) "O content soul, [27] come back to your Lord, well-pleased, well-pleasing. [28] So, enter among My (special) servants, [29] and enter My Paradise." [30]

Commentary

This Sūrah, by swearing five oaths in its beginning, emphasises the

following fact:

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبِالْمُرْصَادِ

Surely your Lord is ever on the watch. [89:14]

This means that Allah is watching over whatever you do, and reward or punishment for your deeds is certain and inevitable.

The first among the five oaths sworn at the beginning is Fajr (dawn). It may refer to the dawn of every day that brings about a great change in the world, and thus directs man's attention to the absolute Omnipotence of Allah. It is also possible that it refers to the dawn of some specific day. Commentators like Sayyidnā 'Alī, Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn Zubair رضي الله عنه say that the word is general, and it refers to any dawn. According to another narration of Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, it refers to the dawn of the first of Muḥarram which is the start of the lunar-Islamic calendar. Sayyidnā Qatādah رضي الله عنه, among others, has interpreted it in the same way.

Some commentators, like Mujāhid and 'Ikramah, refer this to the dawn of 'the Day of Sacrifice' on the tenth of Dhul Ḥijjah. A narration from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه concurs with this view. The reason for this specification is that according to Islamic principles, Allah has made a night to precede the day. All days are preceded by their respective nights, except the 'the Day of Sacrifice', because the night that precedes the Day of Sacrifice is not the night of Sacrifice. In fact, the preceding night, according to Shari'ah, is the night of 'Arafah. Staying at 'Arafāt is the most important and foremost rite of Ḥajj. If a pilgrim is not able to reach 'Arafāt on the 9th of Dhul Ḥijjah, any time in the day or in the night following it to halt there for a while, he will not be considered to have performed Ḥajj at all. However if he arrives there any time during the night before the break of dawn on the 10th of Dhul Ḥijjah, his halt in 'Arafah will be acceptable and his Hajj will be considered valid. This shows that the day of 'Arafah has two nights, one preceding it, and another following it. The Day of Sacrifice [10th of Dhul Ḥijjah] has no night. From this point of view, the dawn of the day of Sacrifice, among all the days of the year, occupies a special position. [Qurtubī].

Next, it says:

لَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ (and by the Ten Nights...89:2) According Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās

ﷺ, Qatādah, Mujāhid, Suddi, Daḥḥāk, Kalbī and other leading commentators, the 'ten nights' refers to the [first] ten nights of Dhul Ḥijjah. It is recorded in Ḥadīth that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that the first ten days of Dhul Ḥijjah are the most meritorious days for Allah's worship. Every fast of the day is equivalent to fasts of the whole year. Worshipping Allah every night during this period is equivalent to worshipping Him on the night of Qadr. [Transmitted by Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah with a weak chain of authorities from Abū Hurairah ؓ - Maḥzarī]. Abū-z-Zubair narrated from Sayyidnā Jabir ؓ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said : وَالْفَجْرِ وَلَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ (I swear by the dawn and by the Ten Nights' refers to the first ten days of Dhul Ḥijjah. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ said that these are the ten nights that are mentioned in the story of Prophet Mūsā ؑ: التَّيْنِ: ... then We supplemented them with ten' [7:142]. Thus these are the ten nights in the whole year which are most meritorious. Imām Qurṭubī says that the Ḥadīth reported by Sayyidnā Jābir ؓ indicates that the ten nights of Dhul Ḥijjah are most meritorious, and that the same ten nights of Dhul Ḥijjah were designated for Prophet Mūsā ؑ.

وَالشَّفْعِ وَالْوَتْرِ (and by the even and the odd,...89:3). The Qur'ān has not specified what the words 'the even' and 'the odd' refer to. Therefore, the commentators have assigned different interpretations to them. Nevertheless, it has been mentioned in a Prophetic Ḥadīth narrated by Abū-z-Zubair from Sayyidnā Jābir ؓ thus:

(وَالْفَجْرِ. وَلَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ) هُوَ الصَّبْحُ وَعَشْرُ النَّحْرِ وَالْوَتْرُ يَوْمَ عَرَفَةَ وَالشَّفْعُ يَوْمَ النَّحْرِ

'Fajr' refers to the dawn, and 'the ten nights' refer to the first ten nights of Dhul Ḥijjah [which include the Day of Sacrifice], and that *al-watr* [the odd] refers to the day of 'Arafah [because it falls on the ninth] and *ash-shaf'* refers to the Day of Sacrifice [because it falls on the 10th day of Dhul Ḥijjah].'

Qurṭubī cites this narration and confirms that its chain of authorities is more authentic than the other tradition narrated by Sayyidnā 'Imrān Ibn Ḥusain ؓ which talks about odd [three] and even [two/four] units of prayers. Therefore, Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ 'Ikramah and Naḥḥās رَحِمَهُمَا اللّٰهُ تَعَالٰى have preferred the view that 'even' refers to the Day of Sacrifice and 'odd' refers to the day of 'Arafah.

Some commentators like Ibn Sīrīn, Masrūq, Abū Ṣāliḥ and Qatādah رَحِمَهُمَا اللّٰهُ تَعَالٰى said that 'even' refers to the entire creation, because Allah

has created them in pairs, and thus He says:

وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ

'And from everything We have created (a pair of) two kinds
[51:49]'

- belief/disbelief, happiness/unhappiness, light/darkness, night/day, cold/heat, sky/earth, human/Jinn and male/female as against all of these pairs, Allah is the only One Being 'odd' that does not have a pair:

هُوَ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الصَّمَدُ

'He, is Allah, the One, Besought of all, needing none'

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَسْرِ (and by the night when it moves away...89:4). The word *yasr* is derived from *sarā* and means 'to walk in the night' or 'travel by night'. The verse says when the night itself moves away. It signifies 'when the night departs and goes away.' After taking oath by these five items, the next verse says:

هَلْ فِي ذَلِكَ قَسَمٌ لِذِي حِجْرٍ (Is there [not] in that an oath (enough) for a man of sense?...89:5). An intelligent person is, in a very special style, invited to think and reflect. The word *hijr* literally denotes 'to prevent'. The intellect has been called *hijr* because it prevents the person from doing which is unbecoming of him – actions or statements. Are these oaths not sufficient for a man possessed of intellect, sound reasoning, understanding and religious discernment? This sentence is in the form of interrogation to awaken man from his slumber. The subject of oaths is implied, though not stated explicitly. The verse purports to say that when man considers into the Majesty of Allah and reflects on the greatness of objects of oaths, it would be confirmed and verified that everyone has to give account of his deeds, and reward and punishment in the Hereafter is sure. In this connection, reference is made to the destruction of three previous nations: [1] the nation of 'Ād; [2] the nation of Thamūd; and [3] the nation of Fir'aun (the Pharaoh). 'Ād and Thamūd are two nations whose genealogy link up with Iram. Thus Iram may refer to both, 'Ād as well as Thamūd. Here however with 'Ād only the name Iram is linked for genealogical reasons:

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِعَادٍ. إِرَامَ دَاتِ الْعِمَادِ (Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with [the people] 'Ād of Iram, the men of tall pillars...(89:6-7). The word

'Iram' in verse [7] is, grammatically speaking, either *'atf bayān* (syndetic explicative) or *badal* (complement). The purpose of the construction is to specify one of the two tribes of 'Ād. This statement specifies that it refers to *'Ad-ul-'ulā* (the early generation of 'Ād). A remnant from the former generation is referred to as *'Ād-ul-'Ukhrā*, because they are linked with their great-grand father Iram more closely than *'Ad-ul-'Ukhrā*. Here the Qur'ān refers to the first tribe as 'Ād Iram. In Surah An-Najm, they are described as: *عَادَ الْأُولَى* (the earlier 'Ād,) [53:50]

They are introduced here by the epithet: *ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ* (the men of tall pillars)

The word *'imād* and *'amūd* means 'pillar'. The people of 'Ād are mentioned as the men of tall pillars because they were very tall in stature. They were a stronger and more powerful people than any other nations. The Qur'ān describes them explicitly, thus:

لَمْ يَخْلُقْ مِثْلَهَا فِي الْبِلَادِ (the like of whom were never created in the lands...89:8) The Qur'ān made it clear that this nation was the tallest and the strongest in their physical stature, but the Qur'ān did not state the exact measurement of the people because it was unnecessary [for Qur'ānic purposes]. Therefore, that detail has been left out. Israelite traditions, however, narrate such incredible reports about their stature, height and power that are difficult to believe. It is reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه and Muqatil that they were six yards or eighteen feet [5.46] tall. This too seems to be derived from Israelite reports. And Allah knows best!

Some commentators say that 'Iram' is the name of the 'paradise' which 'Ād's son Shaddād had built. The epithet 'possessor of tall pillars' [translated above as 'men of tall pillars'] is used for him. The [so-called paradise] was a lofty structure standing on tall pillars built with gold and silver and studded with jewels, gems and other precious stones, so that people may prefer an instant and ready at hand paradise instead of Paradise of the Hereafter. When this magnificent palace was ready for use, and Shaddād, together with the leaders of his kingdom, wanted to enter, Divine punishment overtook them. They, together with the palaces, were completely destroyed. [Qurṭubī]. In this interpretation, the verse refers to a specific punishment which descended upon the paradise built by 'Ād's son Shaddād. In the first interpretation, which the majority of

the commentators prefer, it refers to all the punishments that descended upon the nation of 'Ād.

وَفِرْعَوْنَ ذِي الْأَوْتَادِ (and with Fir'aun [the Pharaoh], the man of the stakes...89:10). The word *autad* is the plural of *watad* that means 'peg or stake or nail'. Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) is referred to as 'the man of the stakes'. There are several reasons for this. Majority of the commentators hold the view that he was so called because of the brute torture and cruel torment he inflicted on the people. When he was angry with people, he would hammer stakes into the ground and tie them to these, so that they could be tortured; or he would hammer stakes into their hands and feet, as they lay on the ground in the scorching heat of the sun, and leave them to the mercy of snakes and scorpions. Other commentators have recounted a lengthy story about his wife 'Āsiyah. She embraced 'Imān (the True Faith) and expressed it to Fir'aun (the Pharaoh). This angered him and he inflicted on her the same type of brute torture and destroyed her. [Maẓharī].

فَصَبَّ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّكَ سَوْطَ عَذَابٍ (So, your Lord unloosed on them the whip of torment....89:13). The punishment inflicted upon them as a result of their mischief is referred to here as a 'whip of torment'. It signifies that just as lashes are inflicted across different parts of the body, the torment these nations received was similar to it in that they suffered different kinds of punishment.

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبَالْمُرْصَادِ (Surely your Lord is ever on the watch....89:14). The word *mirṣād* or *marṣad* [is derived from the root *raṣada* which means 'to lie in wait or on watch']. Thus it means 'an ambush, or a place of observation; it is usually used for a place where persons have to travel through a pass in which someone is lying in wait to strike them'. The verse purports to say that Allah is ever watching and observing their movements and activities. No one should think that he could escape Divine torment, because all are under His authority and Power, and He may administer His punishment whenever He wills. Some commentators state that this verse is the subject of the five oaths mentioned taken in the first five verses of this Sūrah.

Wealth and Poverty are no Signs of One's Acceptance or Rejection

لَا يَقُولُ رَبِّي ۚ فَأَمَّا الْإِنْسَانُ إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَأَكْرَمَهُ وَنَعَّمَهُ، فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَكْرَمَنِ وَأَمَّا إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهُ

أَهَانٍ (As for man, when his Lord tests him, and thus gives him honour and bounties, he says, "My Lord has honoured me. But when he tests him, and thus straitens his provision for him, he says, "My Lord has disgraced me...89:15-16). The word 'man' here primarily refers to an 'unbelieving man' who may form any thought about Allah as he feels like, but in its general sense, the word may include a Muslim as well who has the same thought as an unbeliever. When Allah gives abundant wealth and good health to such people, the devil puts into their head two false ideas. First, they succumb to their baser instincts; they become haughty and arrogant; and they think that the wealth and health is the result of their superior intellect, personal capability, efforts and achievement. Secondly, they think that they are enjoying a favourable status with Allah. If they did not enjoy the favourable position with Him, they would not have been granted such an abundance of wealth. By the same token, if Allah curtails their sustenance i.e. they suffer some degree of poverty, they regard it as a curse from Allah, and complain that He is humiliating or dishonouring them, while they deserved honour and respect. The unbelievers and idolaters do hold such thoughts and ideas, as the Qur'ān has pointed out on many occasions, but it is regrettable that many Muslims nowadays fall into similar ideas. Allah refutes man's belief by the expression كَلَّا Kallā 'No/never!' The matter is not as he claims. Wealth does not indicate acceptance of a man by Allah, nor does poverty indicate rejection. [For indeed Allah gives wealth to those whom He loves and those whom He does not love. Likewise, He withholds sustenance /wealth from those whom He loves and those whom He does not love.] Often the matter is quite the contrary. Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) claimed godhead and lordship, yet he never suffered from any headache. Some of Prophets ﷺ were sliced, by enemies, into two pieces with a saw. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said that the poor refugees will enter Paradise forty years before the wealthy *muhājirs* (Immigrants). [Imām Muslim has transmitted it from 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ؓ - Maḏharī]. In another narration, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said that whomever Allah loves, He keeps him away from the worldly luxuries as people keep away their sickly patients from water. [Aḥmad and Tirmidhī transmitted it on the authority of Qatādah Ibn Nu'mān__ Maḏharī].

Spending on the Orphan is not Sufficient. Their respect is also necessary

لَا تَكْرُمُونَ الْيَتِيمَ (No! But you do not honour the orphan....89:17). The

unbelievers are warned, in these verses, against some of their evil character traits. First, as is mentioned in this verse, they do not honour and treat the orphans kindly. The basic objective of the verse is that they deprive them of their rights, and do not spend on them what is due to them, but the expression used is that they do not honour them, probably to indicate that the requirement of Allah's gratitude, and also of humanitarian sense, is not only that the orphans are given their dues by spending wealth on them, but it is also necessary to honour them and treat them kindly. The guardians should not despise and look down upon their wards, and to discriminate them against their own children. This is apparently a rebuff to the unbelievers who think that wealth is an 'honour' and poverty is a 'dishonour'. After refuting their thoughts and ideas with the expression *Kallā* 'No/ never!', the verse under comment progresses to say *bal* 'But' that they are deprived of sustenance, because they squander it in immoral pursuits, depriving the orphans of their rights in it.

وَلَا تَحْضُوهَا عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمُسْكِينِ (and do not encourage one another to feed the needy...89:18). This is the second evil trait of the unbelievers. The style of this verse, in condemning the evil trait of the unbelievers, indicates that it is an obligation of the affluent to spend on the poor and indigent from their own wealth. Obviously, the poor are unable to spend owing to lack of means, but they should at least encourage others to feed the needy.

وَتَأْكُلُونَ التُّرَاثَ أَكْلًا لَمًّا (And you devour the inheritance with a sweeping gulp...89:19). The word *lamm* means to 'gather, amass, concentrate the thing'. This is the third evil trait of the unbelievers, and the verse signifies that they devour inheritance with voracious appetites however they can get it, whether by lawful means or unlawful means. They gather them all together to make a sweeping gulp. When someone passes away, they take their own shares, together with the shares of others, regardless of whether the shares belong to orphans, widows or people who are absent. [As a matter of principle,] it is not permitted to mix up lawful and forbidden wealth in any transaction. Here, however, 'inheritance' has been particularly mentioned, probably because having a greedy eye on it and pursuing it are a proof of man's greed and voracity for wealth. He stares at it like a beast of prey waiting for the person to die, and looking for the opportunity to distribute the estate. But an honourable man of

principle and a noble person would not look at the wealth of the deceased with greedy eyes.

وَتُحِبُّونَ الْمَالَ حُبًّا جَمًّا (and love wealth, with an excessive love....89:20). The word *jamm* means 'excessive'. This verse refers to the fourth evil trait of the unbelievers. They have an insatiable love for wealth. The word 'excessive' indicates that love of wealth in itself, in a sober sense, is a natural instinct of man. That has not been condemned here. What is denounced is the excessive or insatiable love of wealth. After describing the evil traits of the unbelievers, the passage reverts to the main theme that was emphasised in the earlier part of the Sūrah with five oaths, that is, the punishment of the Hereafter. In this connection, it first mentions the process of the end of the world, and subsequently the establishment of the Day of Resurrection, thus:

كَلَّا إِذَا دُكَّتِ الْأَرْضُ دَكًّا دَكًّا (No! When the earth will be crushed thoroughly to be turned into bits...89:21). The word *dakk* literally means 'to pound or crush a thing into bits and pieces'. This refers to the earthquakes that will crush and ground the mountains to dust. The world will thus be dissolved. This will be the first stage of Resurrection. When this stage of Resurrection ends, the second stage of Resurrection will begin. The word *dakkan* is repeated in order to show that there will be a series of earthquakes before the dissolution of the world.

وَجَاءَ رَبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا (and your Lord will come, and the angels as well, lined up in rows....89:22) They will arrive in the Plain of Gathering. The words 'your Lord will come' is an allegorical expression. No one, besides Allah, knows the nature of His coming. The words 'and the angels [will arrive] as well, lined up in rows' are clear in meaning.

وَجِئَاءَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِجَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ وَأَنَّى لَهُ الذِّكْرَى (and *Jahannam* [Hell], on that day, will be brought forward, it will be the day when man will realise the truth, but from where will he take advantage of such realisation?.... 89:23). No one, besides Allah, knows how exactly 'Hell' will be brought forward in the Plain of Gathering. Apparently, 'Hell' which is at the moment beneath the seventh earth will at that moment will flare up, and the oceans become part of the flame. In this way, Hell during the gathering will be in front of all.

يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ وَأَنَّى لَهُ الذِّكْرَى (it will be the day when man will realise the

truth, but from where will he take advantage of such realisation? - 89-23). The word *tadhakkur* in this context means 'to realise'. The unbelievers will realise the errors of their ways in the Hereafter, but it will be too late, because it is this present world where 'Imān and good deeds benefit the people. The Hereafter is the place only for reckoning and retribution. Man will express his remorse thus:

يَقُولُ يَلَيْتَنِي قَدَّمْتُ لِحَيَاتِي (He will say, "O Would that I had sent ahead [some good deeds] for [this] my life!"....89:24). When he faces the torment of disbelief and idolatry on that day of devastation, man will lament that he should have carried out good deeds and refrained from sin in this world to be saved from punishment in the Hereafter. But it will be of no avail. Allah says: 'So, that day, no one can punish like He will punish, nor can anyone shackle like He will shackle....89:26] Having described the torment of the unbelievers, the conclusion of the Sūrah gives cheerful news to the believers that they will be admitted into Paradise. Thus it says:

يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ("O contented soul...89:27). Here the soul of the believer is referred to as *nafs muṭma'innah* 'the contented soul'. The word *muṭma'innah* literally means 'calm'. It refers to the soul that is 'peaceful and tranquil' as a result of remembrance and obedience of Allah. When he abandons it, he feels restless. This is probably the same soul as is made pure, through spiritual exercises and discipline, from the evil traits and bad conduct. Obedience of Allah and His remembrance becomes his predisposition. Sharī'ah becomes his nature.

إِرْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ (come back to your Lord....89:28). The words 'come back' indicate that his first place was with his Lord, and now he is commanded to go back to Him. This confirms the narration that the souls of the believers, together with their Book of Deeds, will be in *'illiyīn*. *'Illiyīn* is a place on the seventh heaven in the shade of the Throne of the Most-Merciful Lord. This is the original resting-place of all human souls, from where they are brought out and put into human body. After death, the souls are returned to that place.

رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً (...well-pleased, well-pleasing....89:28). [The true believer's] soul is well-pleased with decrees destined by Allah and His legislative commands, and Allah too is well-pleased with His slave. The slave's being pleased with Allah's decrees and injunctions is a sign that Allah is pleased

with him. Had Allah not been pleased with him, he would not have had the ability to be pleased with Allah's decree. The true believer's soul is pleased even on his death at the moment of death. Sayyidnā 'Uḡādah Ibn Ṣāmit ؓ narrated from the Holy Prophet ﷺ, as follows:

مَنْ أَحَبَّ لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ أَحَبَّ اللَّهُ لِقَاءَهُ، وَمَنْ كَرِهَ لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ كَرِهَ اللَّهُ لِقَاءَهُ.

"He who loves to meet Allah, Allah loves to meet him; and he who dislikes to meet Allah, Allah dislikes to meet him."

When Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها heard this, she asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ: "We will be able to meet Allah only after death, but we do not like death." The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied: "That is not the case. The truth of the matter is that when death approaches a believer, the angels give him the cheerful news of Paradise and Allah's pleasure. This news makes death dearer to him. Likewise, when death approaches an unbeliever, the torment and punishment is presented to him. This situation makes the death a hateful and reprehensible thing to him." [Transmitted by Bukhārī and Muslim - Maḡharī]. In short, the love and hatred for death of the present time is not counted. What counts is [the love of] death, or [the love of] meeting Allah at the time of the extraction of soul [from the physical body] and [the love of] Allah's pleasure. This is the significance of the phrase: "Well-pleased, well-pleasing"

فَادْخُلِيْ فِيْ عِبَادِيْ (So, enter among My [special] servants...89:29). In other words, the contented soul will be addressed [compassionately], and first asked to enter the fold of righteous and sincere slaves, and then to enter Paradise. This indicates that entry into Paradise depends on their being, first and foremost, in the fold of the righteous believers. Then they will enter Paradise all together. This shows that joining the company of the righteous in this world is a sign that he will enter Paradise with them. Thus Prophet Sulaimān ؑ prayed:

وَادْخُلْنِيْ بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِيْ عِبَادِكَ الصَّالِحِيْنَ

'...and admit me, by Your mercy, among Your righteous slaves...[27:19]'

Prophet Yūsuf ؑ prayed:

وَالْحَقِّنِيْ بِالصَّالِحِيْنَ

'...and make me join the righteous. [12:101]'

The above supplications indicate that the company of the righteous is such a great blessing that even the Holy Prophets ﷺ cannot do without, as a result they pray for it.

وَادْخُلِيْ جَنَّتِيْ (and enter My Paradise.....89:30). In this verse, Paradise is attributed to Allah, and Allah said 'My Paradise'. This is a great honour, and indicates that Paradise will not only have all sorts of eternal comfort, but above all it is a place of Allah's pleasure.

The preceding verses describe the reward of the believers in such a manner that on behalf of Allah, the angels will address their souls honourably and in a befitting manner, as in the verses. It is not clear when they will be addressed. Some commentators say that they will be addressed on the Day of Reckoning after the reckoning is over. The context of the verses confirms this. The punishment of the unbelievers was described above. That will take place in the Hereafter after the Judgement has been passed. It is obvious that the believers will be addressed at the same time. Other scholars indicate that the believers will be addressed in this world at the time of death. Many authentic traditions bear testimony to the veracity of this view. Ibn Kathīr, on the other hand, reconciles the apparently conflicting statements thus: Allah will address the soul of the believers twice with these words. Once at the time of death, and again on the Day of Judgement.

Sayyidnā 'Ubādah Ibn Ṣāmit's ﷺ narration cited earlier supports the view that the address will be at the time of death. In a lengthy narration of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ, recorded in Musnad of Aḥmad, Nasā'ī and Ibn Mājah, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "When death approaches a believer, the angels of mercy bring to him a piece of white silk and say: اخرجى راضية 'Come out [from this body], well-pleased and well-pleasing, to Divine mercy and to the eternal comforts of Paradise' [to the end of narration.]" Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ says that one day he recited the verse يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ (O contented soul) in the presence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, Abū Bakr ﷺ who was present in the assembly, said: "O Allah's Messenger, what a fine address and honour!" The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Behold, the angel will address you thus after your death."

A Few Strange Incidents

Sa'īd Ibn Jubair ﷺ reports that Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ passed

away in Ṭā'if. After the funeral was prepared, a strange bird, the like of which was never seen before, came and entered the body, but no one saw it coming out of it. When it was lowered into the grave for burial, an invisible voice was heard reciting from the side of the grave: يَأْتِيهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ Everyone looked around, but could not find anyone. Another incident is recorded by Ḥāfiẓ Ṭabarānī in his book Kitāb-ul-'Ajā'ib. He narrates with his chain of authorities, an incident about Fattān Ibn Razīn Abī Hāshim that once they were imprisoned in a Roman city. They were presented before their king. The king was an infidel. He coerced them to adopt his religion, and threatened them that if anyone refuses to comply with his command, he would be beheaded. They were a few people. Three of them feared for their lives, adopted his religion and thus became apostates. The fourth person refused to adopt the king's religion. He was beheaded and his head was thrown into a nearby river. When it was thrown, the head went to the bottom of the river. Later, it emerged from the water and came to the surface. Then it looked at the other three persons, and calling each one of them by name, recited:

يَأْتِيهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ﴿٢٧﴾ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً ﴿٢٨﴾ فَادْخُلِي فِي عِلِّيِّ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَادْخُلِي جَنَّتِي ﴿٣٠﴾

"O contented soul, [27] come back to your Lord, well-pleased, well-pleasing. [28] So, enter among My (special) servants, [29] and enter My Paradise." [30]

After that it dived back into the water.

This was an unusual incident which everyone witnessed and heard. When the Christians of that place witnessed this, almost all of them embraced Islam which shook up the king's throne. The three persons who had become apostates reverted to Islam. Caliph Abū Ja'far Maṣṣūr had them all released from their [enemy's] prison.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Fajr
Ends here